

# Cannon Blast



*Keeping the families of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division informed.*

Vol. 1, Issue 1

January 20, 2006



## Fires Bde. makes history as first of its kind to deploy

*Col. Allen Batschelet and Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela uncase the Fires Brigade colors on Camp Liberty, Iraq.*

## CSM salutes Soldiers' supporters

This is a great way to begin a new year and truly the perfect way to close out the old year. Our Soldiers spent Christmas spread out across Iraq and Kuwait.

Just as the Christmas holiday is a symbol of hope for people around the world, our Soldiers are a symbol of hope for the Iraqi people.

I am very confident that the Soldiers of the first Fires Brigade in the United States Army will help continue to improve the lives of the Iraqis.

Every one of our Soldiers and Department of Defense civilians contributions are enormous, historical and will go down for future generations to interpret.

On behalf of all our Soldiers here in Iraq, we are also proud of our families in Texas and elsewhere back home. We realize that Soldiers are not the only ones that have to make sacrifices. We know that we share our hardships with our families.

You can be extremely proud of your Soldier in Iraq as we are proud of you back home.

**-Gil Canuela  
Soldier**



## S-1: Keeping the right people in the battle

Greetings from the Soldiers in the S-1 office! For those of you who are not familiar with what we do in the S-1, we are in the human resources business.

The S-1 has a variety of responsibilities that have to do with Soldiers' personnel actions. These responsibilities include awards, promotions, evaluation reports, finance, leaves and passes, emergency leaves and many others.

Our office members consist of Maj. Andrey Tymniak (brigade adjutant), Sgt. 1st Class Shauna . Patterson (brigade S-1 non-commissioned officer in charge), Staff Sgt. LaTrece Peterson (brigade personnel actions non-commissioned officer), Pfc. Joshua Overton (brigade personnel actions clerk), and Warrant Officer One Arnold Guzman (human resources technician). Pfc. Patricia Wills (brigade personnel actions clerk) could not deploy with us and is part of the rear-detachment.

We stay in constant communication with the rear-detachment and all do our part as a team to make sure that all of the Fires Bde. Soldiers are taken care of in the administrative arena.

Before our deployment in early December, it was our responsibility to manifest Soldiers to ensure that they were on the correct flights. This was long process that required a lot of attention to detail.

It began with identifying the brigade Soldiers that were qualified to deploy. We then issued the

Soldiers their temporary change of station (TCS) orders.

The next step was to set up and conduct the Soldier readiness process during which we made sure that our Soldiers were administratively and medically prepared for our deployment. We will follow the same process upon our re-deployment to Fort Hood.

One of our most critical tasks while we are deployed has to do with tracking the personnel assigned or attached to the Fires Bde. We ensure 100 percent accountability of the Fires Brigade's personnel to give the commander a snapshot of the brigade's combat power.

It is our responsibility to monitor certain specialties that enable us to accomplish our mission. If any specialty falls under a certain percentage, we request replacements to our higher headquarters in order to fill in those positions. This enables us to remain effective by having the right personnel in the right jobs supporting the missions.

We are also responsible for the rest and recuperation leave program. This program allows Soldiers to take some well-deserved time off and return home to loved ones for two weeks (15 days). I will explain more of this process in upcoming articles.

Our job while deployed to Iraq has changed a little, but our focus still remains the same; taking care of Soldiers and making sure they get back to their loved ones safely.

The "Cannon Blast" is an authorized publication for families of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. Contents of the "Blast" are unofficial and do not necessarily reflect the views of the 4th Infantry Division, Department of the Army, Department of Defense or the United States Government.

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# You can't always get what you want...

## But S-4 can usually get what you need

By Maj. Michael Donahue  
Fires Bde. S-4

Like a sycthe of reason cutting through the fog of war, the Fires Brigade logistics section brought clarity, purpose and direction to the brigade's strategic deployment from Texas to Kuwait and onward to Iraq.

Charged with the oversight of the brigade's equipment loading at Fort Hood, the S-4 section coordinated the deployment of every vehicle, trailer and container by truck, rail and ship to the Kuwaiti port of Abu Shaubay, then to the brigade's training base at Camp Virginia and to our final destinations in Iraq.

The strength of the section rests in the steady and experienced tutelage of Warrant Officer One Lionel Marco and Master Sgt. Shelly Gonsalves, who have helped focus the energetic and occasionally effective leadership of Maj. Michael Donahue to get the best out of supply studs Capt. Jerry Frimml,

Staff Sgt. James Donald, Sgt. Kurt Gullens and Spc. Sisily Eager.

In addition to being the wing-nut that kept the brigade moving forward at Camp Virginia, the S-4 section honed its warrior skills by recertifying all our Soldiers on individual weapons and many on heavier, crew-served weapons like the the M2 .50 caliber machinegun and the MK-19 grenade launcher.

Eager served as a gunner on the MK-19 grenade launcher for the convoy from Kuwait to Baghdad providing security for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery Soldiers and equipment.

Once in Baghdad the section put maximum effort into helping the brigade establish a functioning headquarters and resourcing our Soldiers with amenities to improve the quality of life on Camp Liberty.

As the brigade looks to the future, the S-4 section stands ready to provide the critical supply and logistics coordination to make every mission a success.



Courtesy photo

**Spc. Sisily Eager poses while she and other Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Fires Brigade, Soldiers enjoy a break from the convoy to Bagdad from Kuwait.**

## Soldiers analyze dangers to keep buddies safe

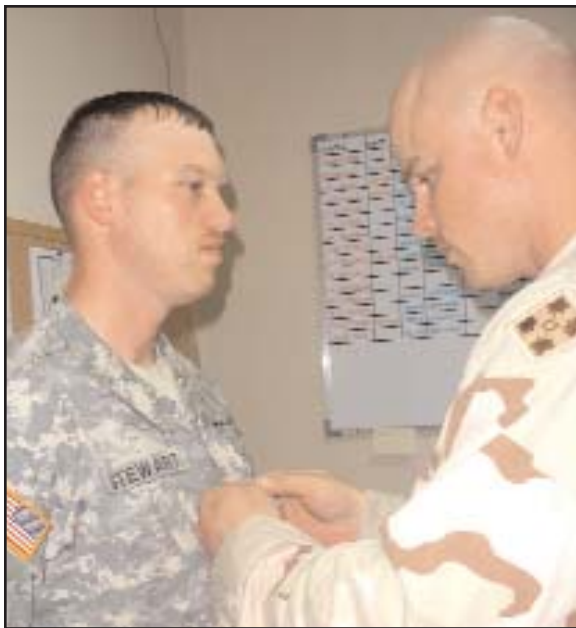


Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO

**Kelly Stewart, left, is promoted to sergeant by Headquarters and Headquarters Battery commander Capt. Damon Wells.**

By Maj. Bryan Gibby  
Fires Bde. S-2

Soldiers assigned to the S-2 section have made history in providing intelligence and security support to the Army's first Fires Brigade ever to deploy to a combat theater.

Among our many responsibilities, Soldiers trained on operations security, personnel security, information security, as well as analysis, communications and information presentation.

Each Soldier plays a key role in helping the brigade fulfill its mission. We have five Soldiers, Capt. Jewell Hoscila, Capt. Rich Ward, Chief Warrant Officer Three James Quick, Sgt. Kelly Stewart and Pvt. Ryan Stowell, working in division headquarters to support counterfire operations.

Master Sgt. Rod Byus, the section non-commissioned officer in charge, has moved mountains to establish the remaining Soldiers and equipment in our brigade operations center. We have a myriad of maps of our base camp, Baghdad and Iraq thanks to Staff Sgt. Lawanda Perry and Spc. Sean Hefflin. Our analysts, Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman, Pfc. Matthew Wilson, Pfc. Racheal Nadeau and Pvt. Kristin Blair, will be "tracking the battle" by focusing on the trends of activity along routes traveled by brigade units.

Everyone has a role to play in the smooth functioning of the section. Each Soldier potentially could be the one to find

Please see S-2, page 4



## Helping Fires Brigade Soldiers get connected...



*Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO*

**Fires Bde. S-6 Soldiers, from left: Capt. Nina Lauramore, Master Sgt. Trevor Jones, Sgt. 1st Class John Terry, Spc. Damian Wilson, Spc. Ariel Class, Staff Sgt. Lisa Walters and Sgt. Patricia Matos.**

**By Maj. Clarence White  
Fires Bde. S-6**

The Fires Brigade S-6 section is responsible for maintaining all communication systems throughout the brigade.

The systems include but are not limited to: Force 21 Battle Command, Brigade and Below, AM/FM radios, satellite radios, servers, routers, switches, audio/video equipment, computers, printers and all phone types.

The personnel who install, operate and maintain all the communication systems are Maj. Clarence White, Capt. Nina Lauramore, Master Sgt. Trevor Jones, Sgt. 1st Class John Terry, Staff Sgt. Lisa Walters, Sgt. Patricia Matos, Sgt. Barron Rhodes, Spc. Brandon Cortez, Spc. Damian Wilson and Pfc. Ariel Class.

During reception, staging, onward movement and integration in Kuwait, S-6 set up and tested all equipment.

Since arriving in Iraq, the section has successfully set-up and tested all of the war-fighting communications systems and is now engaged in an extensive wiring campaign of the brigade tactical operations center. We anticipate installing more than 5,000 feet of cable.

The S-6 section hopes everyone had a good holiday season.

**S-2, cont'd from pg. 3**

that "nugget" that will mean success instead of failure and may save a Soldier's life. That is what is constantly on our minds.

A big challenge and opportunity for the Soldiers is mastering the immense number of automated systems that do just about everything except cook dinner.

Congratulations to Nadeau who was promoted to private first class on Christmas. At her ceremony, the characteristically reticent Nadeau beamed, "What's the difference between a private first class and a first lieutenant? A PFC has been promoted twice!" Most everyone thought that tidbit of wisdom quite amusing.

Congratulations to Stewart, who was promoted to sergeant Jan. 8. This is a huge step in the life of a Soldier, when he or she leaves the ranks of the junior enlisted to become a leader and manager. Stewart has not wasted any time in exercising his new responsibility. He was a crucial link in the success of the advanced party operating in a temporary office in Baghdad. Well done, and well deserved!

## How to send mail to your Soldier:

**HHB Fires Bde.  
Unit #43086  
APO AE 09344-3086**

**HHB 2-20 FA BN  
Unit #71000  
APO AE 09334-1000**

**A/2-20 FA BN  
Unit #73300  
APO AE 09332-3300**

**B/2-20 FA BN and  
C/589th BSB  
Unit #71001  
APO AE 09334-1001**

**A/B 589th BSB  
Unit #43087  
APO AE 09344-3087**

**A/26 TAB  
Unit #43023  
APO AE 09344-3023**

**324th NSC  
Unit #43088  
APO AE 09344-3023**

# Soldiers in 324th NSC handle deployment like pros

By Sgt. Tonja Hodges  
324th Operations NCO

The 324th Network Support Company, Fires Brigade, was activated on April 16, 2005. In less than nine months its Soldiers found themselves deployed.

Once at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, 324th NSC was part of the joint network node validation digital exercise.

"The purpose of the validation was to test and update our computer and satellite network prior to arriving in theatre," says Pfc. Khalisha Grant, a member of the JNN team. "It was essential to ensure our system was current because once in theatre we wouldn't have time to worry about hardware and software issues."

Another vital part to the validation is the KU Band Antenna.

"The KU band antenna is the primary data and voice transmitter to distant locations," said Spc. James McCoy, satellite operator.

In addition to the JNN and KU Band, the Soldiers also vigorously



Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO

**Sgt. 1st Class Mark Branch, frequency manager, gives Soldiers at Range 7A in Kuwait a safety brief before weapons' zero. Soldiers participated in a variety of training events before moving north to Iraq, some of which were not available the last time 4th Infantry Division deployed.**

tested the Force 21 Battle Command, Brigade and Below systems.

"The main reason for the validation of the systems was to track other FBCB2s or Blue Force trackers and verify proper maps and

overlays. Also, we needed to ensure we could send messages between our networks," said Sgt. Randy Shilton, network manager team chief.

The Soldiers of 324th NSC also established a tactical operations center. The underlining purpose of a TOC is to have a proficient area of operation. The network and all accompanying assets are monitored.

"Many Soldiers don't realize all that revolves around setting up a network. Believe me, there's more to networking than just flipping a switch," said Grant.

The Soldiers completed the DIGEX a day early because of how smoothly it ran.

Although the validation exercise was instrumental in the preparation for Iraq, it was not the only area of concentration.

Four of the 324th NSC Soldiers, 1st Lt. Kate Caughlin, Staff Sgt. Carlos Owens, Pfc. Hermann Kreimann and Pfc. Zil Shah prepared and trained to take Please see NSC, page 6

## Safety: Making sure everyone gets home in one piece

By Maj. Todd Ratliff  
Fires Bde. Safety Officer

Safety is everyone's business. This phrase is often used to increase soldier awareness to the fact that anyplace, anytime safety is an integral part of life in Iraq.

From the highest general to the newest private, all are equally vested to stop any unsafe act, regardless of rank.

We place this high level of precedence on safety because we need every soldier to maintain our combat power.

We develop risk assessments, (breaking a job down into specific individual tasks) in order to identify hazards so we can develop a safer way to do business.

We value each soldier as if they were our own son or daughter and as leaders, it's our responsibility to focus on getting each soldier home to their loved ones.

## Fires Bde. leadership asks for help putting a name to a 'monstrous' face

From staff reports

Today, in a rare series of events, Sgt. Maj. Jones, S-3 sergeant major, Fires Brigade, had a highly unusual run-in with an elusive beast.

This animal, according to the debriefing, resembled a long, monstrous cat.

"In my 25 years of service, I've never seen anything like it," said Jones.

However, intelligence tells us that the sergeant major was not wearing his glasses that day, so source accuracy has yet to be determined.

The mystery beast has been temporarily nick-named "litten" by those in charge of the investigation, both for the animal's likely resemblance to a kitten and also for the fact that investigators believe that Jones may be

stretching the truth just a little.

We are having a contest for the best drawing and a name for the animal. Please send your drawing, and proposed name, to Master Sgt. Rod Byus, HHB Fires Bde, Unit #43086 APO AE 09344-3086.

The deputy commander, Lt. Col. Timothy Daugherty, is offering the prize for the best drawing and most creative name. Rumor has it he's trying to get rid of his palm tree in a toilet lawn ornament, but the likelihood of him giving up that treasure is slim to none.

Look for contest results in the April news letter. Remember to put your return address in the document you send to us, so that you can receive your prize if you're the winner.

Happy Hunting!

# Medics get opportunity to broaden skills



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec, Fires Bde. PAO

**Spc. Timothy Peters prepares to convoy from Camp Virginia, Kuwait, to Camp Liberty, Iraq. Peters was prepared to provide medical assistance on the convoy, but the convoy reached Iraq without problems.**

**By Maj. Barbara Bowsher  
Fires Bde. Surgeon**

The Fires Brigade medical section is setting up for their mission of providing medical care for our Soldiers over the next year.

For all of us, the first few weeks have been spent unloading equipment and setting up our respective aid stations, so we can begin providing sick call care to our Soldiers.

Those of us at Camp Liberty will also be augmenting the 602nd Troop Medical Clinic during the year. This will be a great opportunity for us to work with another unit and broaden our medical skills as the TMC sees a higher level of medical care than the aid station provides.

Most of our section is located on Camp Liberty.

Capt. James Silverstrim and Sgt. 1st Class James Walck are the brigade medical planners. They have been busy getting our medical supplies, obtaining our ambulances and researching the medical evacu-

ation plans for the base.

Our medical platoon leader, 2nd Lt. Bryan French, has been working to set up the medics training and work schedule with the 602nd TMC, in addition to our own aid station.

French has also been tasked for several other jobs with in the brigade and currently will be filling in for the safety officer for a short period of time.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Foster is wearing many hats since arriving in Iraq, to include being the battery's fire marshal.

Sgt. Angelina Marrero has worked hard at setting up a well-laid out Aid Station for the Battery.

Our medics, Spc. Larry Mellette, Spc. Timothy Peters, Pfc. Jeffery Legere, and Pfc. Dorje Mecca have been running the aid station and working out of the 602nd TMC.

We also have Cpl. Saul Trevino, who will be on the personnel security detachment while here.

The medics have been doing a Please see **MEDICS**, page 8

## Legal section sees personnel shift

**By Sgt. Matthew Edmonds  
Fires Bde. Legal NCO**

The Fires Brigade legal office is up and running at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

The move was hectic and fast paced, but we made it here safely with all personnel and equipment.

Capt. Michael Green flew up early to take a new position with operational law. He will deal with the new Iraqi government on a daily basis throughout the deployment. Although still assigned to Fires Bde., his duties will remove him from the office.

Sgt. Matthew Edmonds traveled from Kuwait with our common user land transport team and all of our vehicles.

Shortly after arriving he took another trip up to visit our distant unit 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery. While there, Edmonds coordinated with the 101st Airborne Division to ensure legal assistance

and support for our soldiers.

Our new trial counsel is Capt. Diara Andrews. She belongs to Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 4th Infantry Division, but she will handle all cases on Camp Liberty.

Spc. Johnathan Wheaton is scheduled to deploy on Jan. 26 from Fort Hood. The workload is twice what we see at home so his face will be a welcome sight.

We have a new addition to the Fires Brigade legal shop as of Jan. 4. Staff Sgt. Jason Burke just signed in at Fort Hood and he will be taking over as soon as he arrives in theater. He's arriving from a tour in Japan, and he's accompanied by his wife and two children. They will be staying at Fort Hood.

As always Fires Bde. legal is the first stop for our Soldiers if they have any legal issues. We will continue to provide this support, make every effort to take care of our soldiers.

## NSC, cont'd from pg. 5

the company's vehicles and equipment in the convoy from Kuwait to Iraq.

"No matter how many times we checked the vehicle, trained, rehearsed, and conducted pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections, the feelings of tension, edginess, excitement, and apprehension would not go away until we rolled in through the gates at Camp Liberty," said Caughlin.

Presently, the Soldiers of 324th NSC are setting up network operations at the Fires Brigade tactical operations center. The Soldiers will operate and maintain the JNN, enhanced position location reporting system and the command post node.

The newly standing 324th NSC is a well-rounded organization that has successfully executed all tasks and will continue being successful throughout all future missions.





Courtesy photo

**Spc. Aaron Taylor, command driver, performs operator maintenance on his M1114 uparmored Humvee on Camp Liberty, Iraq.**

## A/26 stakes claim of Radar Hill

**By 1st Sgt. Brian Bruce  
A/26 First Sergeant**

Hello and Happy New Year! I hope the families and friends of the Wolfpack have enjoyed the holidays.

All the soldiers in Battery A 26th, Target Acquisition Battery have performed tremendously and I am proud of every one of them. They have represented the Iron Gunners with pride and professionalism.

While at Camp Beuhring, a number of soldiers were able to complete ranges and training exercises such as convoy live fire and entry control points, tasks that could be asked of A/26 soldiers. Know that whatever the mission, each and every member of the Wolfpack is amply prepared.

We followed that by moving from Camp Beuhring on to Camp Liberty. We immediately began to assume the role of the target acquisition battery for Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

On Dec. 24, A/26 FA completed relief in place / transfer of authority with the 2nd Field Artillery Detachment, 101st Air Assault Division, Fort Campbell, Ky. The soldiers of 2nd FAD did an outstanding job over the previous year and have set a high standard for A/26. However, I have no reservations that the soldiers of A/26 will leave their own mark on Camp Liberty and Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

We are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead and willing to accept them with pride and honor. Your soldiers will do an outstanding job over the next year and I will ensure you that they are at all times perform-

ing those duties in as safe an environment as possible.

A/26 is fortunate to have been given some tremendous facilities. The battery has a large command post facility, an enclosed motor pool with heat and air conditioning and of course, quality living conditions.

The battery's location is close to all the important facilities that maintain a good quality of life. The dining facility, morale, welfare and recreation center, gym, and laundry service are all within a stone's throw from the battery area. The battery is also fortunate to have a nice day room to watch sporting events and movies.

I want to say a special thank you to all the family members back at Fort Hood or who have returned home to their families during the deployment. I hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits. Your hard work and devotion is what enables us to focus on the mission, and we could not be successful without your love and support.

I also want to say hello and thank you to all the members of the family readiness group who have remained at Fort Hood and who are devoting so much personal time into the battery FRG. I cannot thank you enough. It is truly appreciated by all the soldiers in A/26.

Finally, I would like to give a heartfelt congratulation to Sgt. Jason Young and his wife, Susan, for becoming grandparents on Jan. 3 of a 9 lb., 4 oz., 21 inch long boy. We are going to have an outstanding year here in Iraq and I want all of you to know that for each and everyone of us, you are in our thoughts and prayers each and every day. Wolfpack!

## Re-up kicks off strong deployment

**By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Kirkland  
Fires Brigade Career Counselor**

The Brigade Retention Team has made great strides in sustaining our Army.

During the first two weeks of the deployment, all units conducted mass re-enlistment ceremonies.

All 53 of these Soldiers re-enlisted for either Option 1 (Regular Army) or Option 2 (Current Station Stabilization), ensuring that 70 percent of them will remain with the Fires Bde. after deployment.

The success of a unit's retention program is measured by how many of its soldiers reenlist to stay with that unit. Great job Fires Brigade!

Your retention representatives are: Sgt. 1st Class Mark Kirkland, brigade career counselor; Staff Sgt. Jeffery Gorecki, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery; Staff Sgt. Richard Bright and Sgt. Valrica Pollard, 589th Brigade Support Battalion; Sgt. Vincent Baker, 324th Network Support Company; and Sgt. Salvador Mendez, Battery A, 26th Field Artillery.

There have been some recent changes in reenlistment incentives, such as the recent increase in bonus multipliers.

MILPER Message 06-007 dated Jan. 5 reports an increase of bonus multipliers and a \$7500 cap increase for the following:

*0.5 increase for Soldiers with an original ETS date between Jan. 6 and Sept. 30.  
1.5 increase for soldiers with an original ETS date between Oct. 1, 2006 and Sept. 30, 2007*

These increases are in addition to the current caps and multipliers in effect under current SRB messages at the time of reenlistment. As an example:

*A soldier in the grade of E-4 with a original ETS date between Oct. 1, 2006 and Sept. 30, 2007 in the A zone currently has an SRB of 1.5A under MILPER*

*MSG 05-239, under MILPER Message 06-007 that bonus is increased to 3A with a \$22,500 cap.*

These increases are in effect until April 30. Take advantage while you can. Retention policy changes daily to meet the Army's needs. "STAY IRON GUNNERS"

# HHB settles into Iraq, gives division a hand

**By Capt. Damon Wells**  
**HHB Commander**

Hello to all family and friends of the Hard Rock Battery!

Welcome the first installment of the Cannon Blast. I'd first like to thank everyone for being so supportive during this deployment. A strong support network can really make or break a Soldier. It made me feel good to see all the support we had as we prepared to leave. The friends and family that came out to support their soldiers made a truly positive impact.

Now that we are here in Iraq, I'd like to encourage everyone to keep up that support. Send letters and packages, if you can, and make the effort to communicate. Share your feelings and vent a little. We are one big family over here, but it sure is nice to hear the voice of a wife, mother, father, friend, etc. from the States.

Here in Iraq, the Fires Brigade Headquarters Battery is really helping our division out. We lend our helping hand whenever called upon. I have officers, non-commissioned officers and Soldiers working at Division HQ daily. I know that they received the finest quality soldiers and hopefully they are not planning on keeping them permanently!

As of Jan. 9, we have our tactical

operations center up and running, we have good billeting and chow, we have regular access to phones and e-mail, we are in close proximity to a post exchange; I don't know what else we could ask for, except to be home with our loved ones.

I'd also like to recognize all the outstanding work that your Soldiers have been doing. We trained hard in Kuwait and prepared ourselves for the mission we now stand poised to conduct.

While we were in Kuwait, I had the honor of reenlisting some fine NCOs and soldiers, like Sgt. Matthew Edmonds and Pfc. Cassius Towns. Administering the Oath of Reenlistment to a Soldier in a combat zone is a beautiful thing. It really shows that the Army is doing something right.

I also had the privilege of promoting Spc. Kelly Stewart to sergeant, here in Iraq. That is the most significant promotion in an enlisted soldier's career and one that always makes me proud. I love watching Soldiers become leaders.

I know Andrea is conducting regular family readiness group functions and the brigade is planning on intensifying its efforts to increase communications with the families. Environmental leave is coming up and the order of precedence has been submitted. You all



*Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec, Fires Bde. PAO*

**Headquarters and Headquarters Battery's 1st Sgt. Kenneth Carmikle poses during a break during an early January convoy to Q-West Airbase in northern Iraq.**

should know when your loved ones are coming home pretty soon.

Until the next newsletter, **HARD ROCK 6....OUT!**

## *Brigade ministry team helping all Soldiers find places of worship*

**By Staff Sgt. Michael Miles**  
**Brigade Ministry NCO**

Greetings from Iraq!!! God has blessed the Fires Brigade with the safe journey of the brigade to our base camp.

The brigade chaplain section has been busy setting up religious support for Soldiers of many faiths within the brigade and we have begun the execution of the commander's religious program.

The camp has many different worship opportunities; in fact, there are three chapels to facilitate a wide variety of worship. There are Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, Contemporary Protestant, Traditional Protestant, Latter Day Saints and Wiccan services and well as studies during the week for many of these congregations.

The holidays were a difficult time for us but we made the best of them. The holiday season became a

great time for the soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery and 324th Network Support Company to bond together as a family.

Even though we were missing our families, we fellowshiped together and had a great time. The unit had a party with a traditional, decorated Christmas tree as well as holiday treats like cookies and egg nog. Several Soldiers took part in a "Stinky Santa" gift exchange.

Also, the soldiers had time to visit the morale, welfare and recreation center for sporting events and tournaments such as spades, darts and pool.

On a final note, soldiers of Fires Brigade are very grateful to our family and friends sending us wishes and for the many prayers prayed every day and night.

The brigade ministry team hopes that you find comfort in knowing that your Soldier's spiritual well-being is being taken care of and that we will make it as a brigade family.



# S-3: Keeping their comrades mission-ready

By Capt. Ali Khan  
Fires Bde. S-3

The question asked by every Soldier that goes into harms way: Why am I here?

We know the answer within ourselves because we swear and sign on the dotted line.

The basic reason is to defend the nation against all enemies foreign and domestic, something that is said every time we swear our service to the nation.

In this case we face an enemy in a foreign land.

The Fires Brigade mission, in general, is to ensure that the life of each person in the Baghdad area is safe from any indirect fire, in this case mortar or rocket attacks. Our job is to look for those who try to attack us using indirect fire.

No different from the reason we signed on the dotted line. In this case we defend the life of American Soldiers and the Iraqi people against our enemies.

Of course there is much more to it and some of our people have more specific missions, but all of our missions support the protection of the people in the Baghdad area, not just Soldiers.

That is where S-3 comes in. We are responsible for running the tactical operations center. Just a handful of people work in the TOC, but we are the brain of brigade.

Together with other staff sections we ensure that our units have the necessary support needed to accomplish the mission.

Most of the Soldiers come from Headquarter and Headquarters Battery. Our job is to synchronize all Fires Bde. units, and make sure all the pieces fall into place for the



Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO

**Pfc. Kenneth Honour (left), brigade operations specialist, receives the 4th Infantry Division combat patch from Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Riling, 4th Inf. Div., as Fires Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela looks on.**

mission of protecting our nation and people. We have to keep an eye on the location and movement of personnel in the Fires Bde.

More importantly we ensure that we do our mission and help to accomplish our bigger goal of a stable Iraq.

This group of Soldiers has a deep impact on the mission. They work long hours, and even longer hours without stop when we set up the TOC, sometime two or three times, and they are there working hard.

Each one has an important task to accomplish and every one knows what the other is doing. They answer radios and phones, type

reports, keep the TOC clean and pass information onto higher headquarters.

The knowledge of these Soldiers is incredible. They know everything there is to know about automation, communications, artillery and the mission. I am proud to have them working with me in the TOC.

Each soldier in this organization, from the newest private to the brigade commander, is important. We ensure they do their jobs and have what is needed to do their job.

Why are we here? Not to bust down doors but to protect Soldiers and civilians from being killed or injured from indirect fire.

## MEDICS, cont'd from pg. 6

great job, and have already learned many new skills for their field.

Maj. Barbara Bowsher and Capt. Mark Roschewski, our two doctors in the unit, have been working in the 602nd TMC mainly.

This is a change of pace for them as a pediatrician and internal medicine doctor respectively, but

they are enjoying working with the medics and taking care their Soldiers.

We don't want to forget about our medics and physician's assistant with 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery who are working at bases farther up north. Next newsletter we'll update everyone on how they

are doing.

We want to say "Hello!" to Capt. Philip Ossowski (our PA in rear detachment), who will be joining us here at Camp Liberty later in the year.

Finally we want to say "Hello!" to our families, and let you know we are doing well.